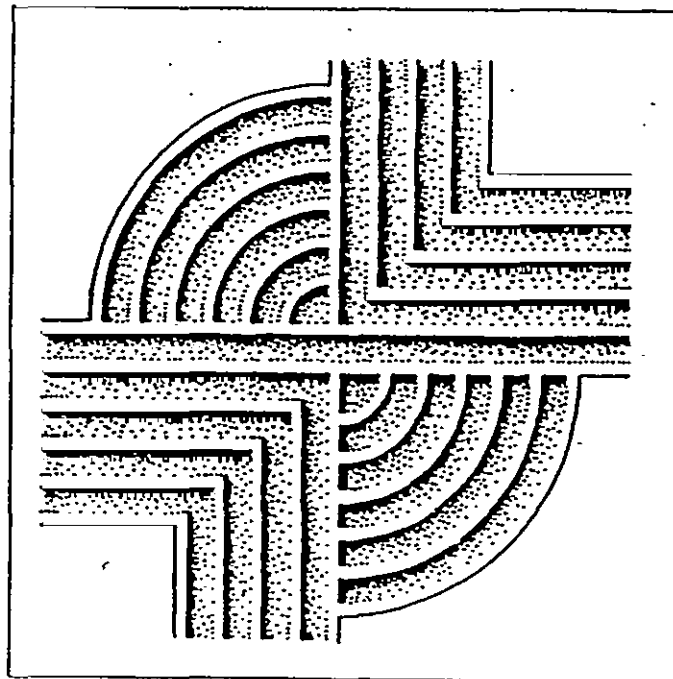


# **MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF DATA RECOVERY AT 38GE377, PAWLEYS ISLAND, GEORGETOWN COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA**



## **RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION 100**

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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF DATA RECOVERY AT 38GE377,  
PAWLEYS ISLAND, GEORGETOWN COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

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Chicora Research Contribution 100

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## Introduction

This study was conducted by Ms. Natalie Adams of Chicora Foundation, Inc. for Mr. Michael Murphy, Director of Sales for Heritage Plantation, which is developing the area containing 38GE377. The property is situated about 12 miles northeast of Georgetown in Georgetown County. The tract is bounded to the north by private property, to the south and east by the 10th fairway of the Heritage Golf Course, and to the west by marsh of the Waccamaw River.

Archaeological site 38GE377 was identified by Dr. Eric Poplin in 1988. Poplin (1988:57) described the site as an undisturbed scatter of prehistoric and historic remains and recommended it as eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. This initial study revealed two site components thought to be spatially separated. In the northern portion of the site (Figure 1) was a scatter of historic materials dating from the early eighteenth century, while in the southern portion of the site were Woodland Period remains, evidenced by relatively dense, large sherds.

Chicora Foundation was requested to submit a proposal for data recovery in March 1992 based on the Memorandum of Agreement and data recovery plan approved by the State Historic Preservation Office. This plan stipulated that in the southern portion of the site a block excavation of approximately 200 square feet would be undertaken to examine the site for features such as hearths or structures. In the northern site area the data recovery plan stipulated that an intensive close-interval shovel test survey would be followed by up to 300 feet of block excavation, if the tests revealed intact cultural features. No additional historical research was called for in this plan. Since this data recovery plan had already been approved by the SC SHPO, Chicora followed the



Figure 1. North site area, view to the southwest.

general outline and our proposal was accepted by Heritage Plantation on November 10, 1992.

This summary has been prepared immediately upon completion of the fieldwork and does not contain information on artifact analysis. It is intended solely to provide a brief descriptive statement of the work conducted by Chicora and to allow the SHPO to verify that the proposed work has actually been accomplished. According to the MOA, such a management summary is minimally necessary for Heritage Plantation to obtain approval from the SHPO to continue development in the site area. This construction will destroy the site remnants and, of course, created the need for archaeological mitigation activities initially.

Archaeological investigations were begun at 38GE377 by a crew of four on January 11 and continued for eight days, until January 20, 1993. A total of 222 person hours were devoted to work at the site, while an additional four person hours were spent off site processing specimens during rain periods. As a result of this work, 875 square feet of site area were opened and 870 cubic feet of soil were moved in primary excavations, all screened through 1/4-inch mesh.

### Shovel Tests

A series of 78 shovel tests were excavated across the northern portion of the site at 20 foot intervals. It was in this area that Poplin (1988) had located a light historic scatter. The boundaries for this survey, established using Poplin's (1988) testing data, included an area 200 feet north-south and 160 feet east-west, located north of a drainage that bisects the site. All soil was screened using 1/4-inch mesh and all cultural materials were collected except for brick, mortar, and shell, which were qualitatively and quantitatively noted in the field and discarded. Field distribution maps of prehistoric and historic remains were then drawn to guide any further work in this portion of the site.

Only four historic artifacts, scattered evenly across the site, were located during this intensive shovel test survey. Prehistoric remains, surprisingly, were relatively dense, concentrating in four different areas (Figure 2). However, the purpose of these shovel tests was to locate historic concentrations and features to determine whether block excavations were needed to locate structures. Based on the shovel tests, no further work appeared necessary.

### Excavations

The grid, established at N12°W, was tied into the southeast corner of a standing structure located just north of the site as well as a benchmark located along the northern edge of the 10th fairway of the Heritage Golf Course. Vertical control was maintained through the use of an assumed elevation datum (nail in the base of a tree) located in the southern site portion. This point was given an arbitrary elevation of 20 feet. The bench mark located in the 10th fairway was a railroad spike in the base of a tree with an assumed elevation of 24.16 feet based on the site's initial elevation datum.

A modified Chicago 10-foot grid was used, with each block designated by its southeast corner, from a 100R100 point at the southwest edge of the site area. Thus, square 150R150 would be located with its southeast corner 50 feet north and 50 feet right (or east) of the 100R100 point. Soil was screened through 1/4-inch mesh using mechanical sifters or roller screens. Excavations were troweled at the base of the unit, photographed in black and white, and plotted. Post holes were bisected when possible, with soil samples collected. Bisected post holes were photographed, plotted, and profiled during their removal.

Field notes were prepared on pH neutral, alkaline buffered paper and photographic material was processed to archival standards. All original field notes, with archival copies, will be curated at the South Carolina Institute of

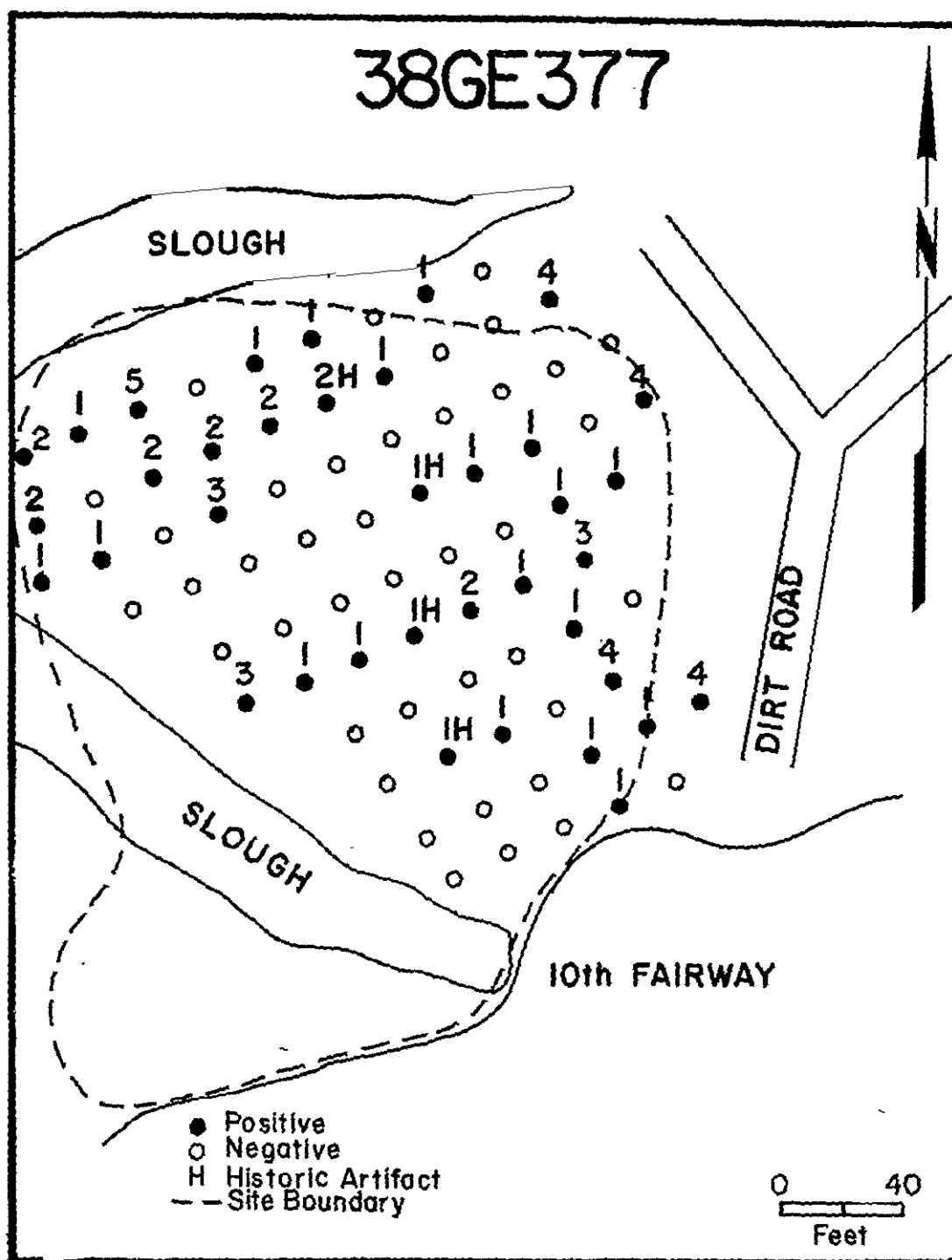


Figure 2. Artifact distribution from shovel testing northern site area based on Poplin's (1988) site map.

Archaeology and Anthropology. All specimens will also be evaluated for conservation needs and will be treated prior to curation.

Three 10 foot excavations (100R110, 110R170, and 120R150) were opened in the southern portion of the site where dense prehistoric remains were anticipated, based on the original survey (Figures 3 and 4). This area revealed a yellowish brown (10YR5/6) A horizon, about 0.6 to 1.1 feet in depth, overlying brownish yellow (10YR6/6) subsoil. This zone contained a moderate amount of prehistoric remains and a very sparse quantity of historic artifacts including brick. Although 120R150 yielded the densest prehistoric remains found in this site area, no features were located in any of the excavations. The prehistoric artifacts were almost exclusively pottery from the Deep Creek Series.

Based on the field distribution map produced for the northern portion of the site (originally thought to be dominated by historic material), two areas were investigated. One five by ten foot unit was located in a high density area along the eastern boundary of the site at 195R340. Despite the shovel test findings, prehistoric artifacts were less dense than expected. The A horizon at 195R340 extended to a depth of 1.2 feet and consisted of brown (10YR4/3) soil overlying brownish yellow (10YR6/6) subsoil. A heavily mottled area containing roots was found at the base of the unit, but no cultural features were located.

A series of seven units (four 10 by 10 foot, two 5 by 10 foot, and one 5 by 5 foot) was located in another area of high density prehistoric remains (Figure 2). The first unit excavated, 250R280, revealed a portion of a foundation post that had been later replaced. Unit 250R285 uncovered the remaining portion of the post (Post Hole 1) as well as a smaller post (Post Hole 2) about one foot to the northeast (Figures 4 and 5). Upon excavation, both posts contained exclusively historic remains. Post Hole 1 measured 1.4 by 1.8 feet which had replaced an older post which was found slightly offset to the north. Post Hole 1 extended to a depth of 1.1 feet below the base of zone 1. Post Hole 2 was located approximately one foot northeast of Post Hole 1. It measured 0.6 by 0.6

## FIGURE NOT AVAILABLE

Figure 3. Troweling the base of unit 110R170, view to the northwest.

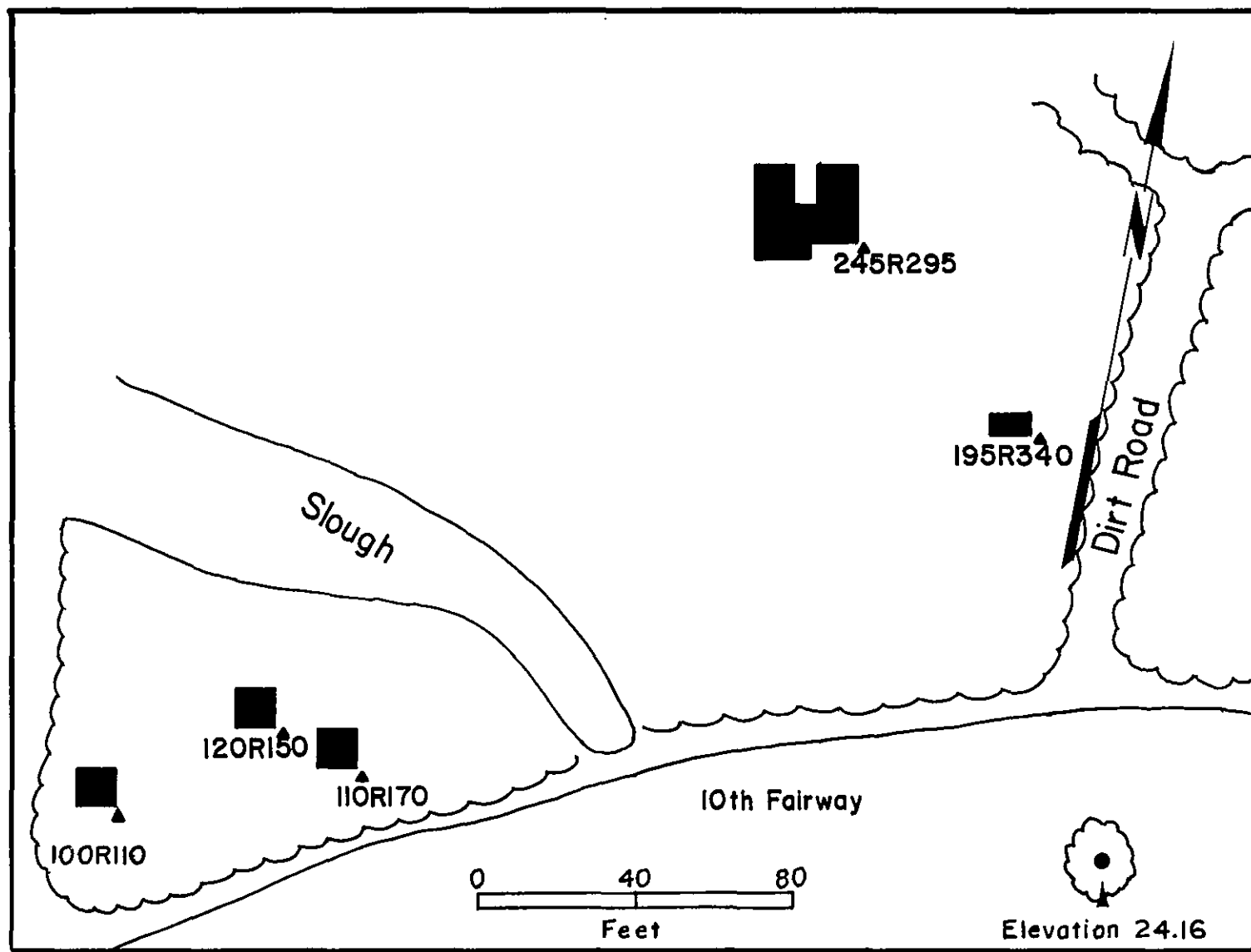
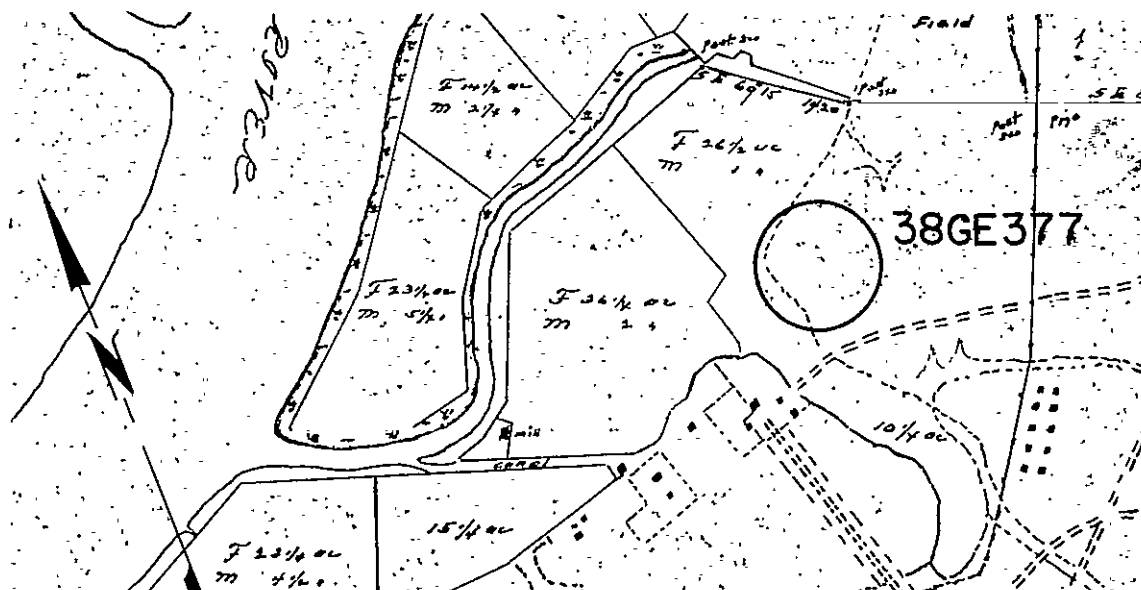


Figure 4. Location of excavations at 38GE377.

# FIGURE NOT AVAILABLE

Figure 5. 250R280 and 250R285 showing Post Holes 1 and 2, north view.





feet and extended to a depth of 0.9 feet below the base of zone 1.

Based on these findings of intact, subsurface architectural features, the S.C. SHPO and the developer were consulted about extending the work for three additional days. Both groups concurred with the additional work. As a result, an additional 400 square feet (240R280, 245R295, 255R280, and 255R295) were excavated. One small stain was excavated in 255R280 which appears to have been a burned tree.

The entire 525 foot block area produced predominately prehistoric remains consistent with those found in the southern site area. The historic remains, however, included nails, pipe stems, bottle glass, delft, white salt glazed stoneware, porcelain, slipware, and Colono ware. The A horizon varied in depth from 0.9 to 1.2 feet and consisted of yellowish brown (10YR5/4) soil overlying brownish yellow (10YR6/6) or very pale brown (10YR7/4) subsoil.

### Interpretations

Excavations in the southern portion of 38GE377 yielded a moderate amount of Deep Creek Series pottery. In addition, a small amount of lithics and at least one abrader was recovered. No subsurface features were encountered. Very little shell was found although the site is located immediately adjacent to a marsh drainage. This suggests that shell fish gathering was not a focus of activities.

Likewise, in the northern portion of 38GE377, prehistoric remains dominated the collection. Historic remains were very sparse indicating that the site was only briefly used, or alternatively was used for activities which produced low densities of refuse, during the mid-eighteenth century. Despite the excavation of 525 square feet in the vicinity of historic features initially identified, no additional features were located. The features present, however, suggest that the latter interpretation may be more likely, since there is evidence of post replacement, indicating a structural lifespan of at least 10 years.

Based on these excavations, with the finding of several large post holes, it is likely that a structure existed at 38GE377. It was probably not a small isolated slave dwelling since it is likely that additional posts would have been found. More likely, the identified structure represents a large utilitarian structure, such as a rice barn, which would have had spans (and support posts) in excess of the area excavated.

No mid-eighteenth century plats of the plantation have been identified, although an 1829 plat of the plantation (Figure 6) found by Chicora during its Cartographic Survey of Georgetown County shows no buildings in the vicinity of the project area. This, coupled with the relatively isolated location of the remains, suggests an agricultural structure.

The presence of ceramics, even in the low quantities found at the site, indicates that some earlier activities took place which are not clearly reflected in the archaeological record. While it is possible that additional historical research may identify the nature of these activities, it is equally likely that the available documentation (especially considering the loss of Georgetown's records during the Civil War) will provide no additional clues.

It is possible, however, to speculate on a variety of causes for this very low density scatter. This speculation is perhaps made more credible when data from other, nearby, sites are also factored in. One site, in particular, bears a marked similarity to 38GE377. During the survey of Willbrook Plantation, Chicora Foundation identified site 38GE337. It may be useful to quote from the original survey:

While the assemblage is spartan, it suggests a domestic site with some kind of permanent architecture. The low density, however,

suggests a single, small occupation and the site's proximity to the canal may be related to its function. The Mean Ceramic Date is 1759.9 . . . . This site dates from the early period of Allston ownership when the three tracts [Willbrook, Oatland, and Turkey Hill] were united under one owner. The absence of a greater quantity of Colono ware tends to suggest something other than a slave dwelling, although the data are insufficient to offer any explanations for the site;s existence or function.

The shovel tests, not surprisingly, failed to identify any subsurface features, although they also failed to find evidence of disturbance (Trinkley 1987:127).

Materials recovered from the site included 15 ceramics (porcelain, white saltglazed stoneware, lead glazed slipware, delft, and creamware), three Colono ware sherds, 10 fragments of glass containers, two nails, five fragments of window glass, and one tobacco pipe stem -- an assemblage remarkably similar to 38GE377.

While no function could be assigned to the Willbrook site, the presence of at least one other site may remove 38GE377 from the category of an aberrancy. It seems more likely, having two very similar sites, that each one represents some heretofore unrecognized plantation activity. Consequently, the research at 38GE377, while perhaps uncomfortable to some for not "solving the problem," is actually rather useful since it serves to redirect our attention.

The existence of sites such as 38GE337 and 38GE377 serve to remind us that there is much we do not know about plantations, in spite of the extensive research. Some things we don't know because we haven't done enough research. Other things we don't know because we have not yet even formulated the questions. Other things we don't know because we have been asking the wrong questions, or ignoring the evidence. Sites such as 38GE337 and 38GE377 also serve as warnings that much of our reconstruction of past lifeways will be simplistic if we fail to explore the entire plantation context (see Brooker and Trinkley 1991).

So even while the research at 38GE377 seems to have failed to answer the most fundamental question -- what activities were taking place at this spot on the plantation -- it has emphasized that there are aspects of plantation archaeology which have yet to be thoroughly explored.

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